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CHIMNEY ROCK

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREA

SAN JUAN NATIONAL FOREST

Reserve
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1992

MAY 1992



PAGOSA

RANGER DISTRICT



Welcome to Chimney Rock Archaeological Area

Chimney Rock has always played a part in the human history of Southwest Colorado. Centuries ago, it served as a landmark for the prospectors, missionaries and conquistadores who settled this rugged country. A thousand years ago, the twin pinnacles were home and sacred shrine to an agricultural group of people called the Anasazi, the "Ancient Ones." Today, the prominent spires and beautiful high mesa setting of Chimney Rock mark one of the most unique archeological sites in the Four Corners.



Chimney Rock is one of the many natural attractions of the almost 2-million-acre San Juan National Forest. From east to west, the Forest stretches from Wolf Creek Pass to Dove Creek, Colorado. From north to south, its boundaries reach from Silverton, Colorado to the New Mexico state line. The Forest includes the half-million-acre Weminuche Wilderness Area, Colorado's largest. From the 14,000-foot tops of the rugged San Juan Mountains to the rolling mesas of the Four Corners, the San Juan National Forest offers every kind of outdoor recreation imaginable.



Visitors view from Fire Tower deck



View of The Great House

The Fire Tower

The best view at Chimney Rock is from the newly constructed fire lookout tower. Originally built in the 1930s to spot forest fires, the new building offers a first-hand feel of the lookout tower plus a commanding view of the ruins below and pinnacles above where birds of prey often soar.

The High Mesa community contains 16 excavated sites, among them the Chacoan structures of the Great House, Guardhouse and Great Kiva. Some 200 other structures which reflect the native architecture rather than the imported Chacoan influence are found across the six square miles of the Archaeological Area.



The Great House

The Great House at Chimney Rock sits atop a high mesa accessible only by a steep-walled narrow causeway of rock. It is built directly upon bare sandstone bedrock, which means the tons of rock and adobe had to be carried up to the site. The Great House dates back to 1076 A.D. and is linked architecturally to the Great Kiva, a sort of Chacoan "community center," found below the mesa.

EDDY



The Southern Ute Indian Tribe

The Taos Pueblo Indians may be the direct descendants of the Chimney Rock Anasazi. The Northern New Mexico tribe believes the pinnacles are a shrine dedicated to the Twin War Gods. The adjacent Southern Ute Indian Tribe holds the pinnacles and ruins sacred as well. After learning about the ancient past of Chimney Rock, you can visit the Southern Ute Reservation which offers a racetrack, museum, and a native arts and crafts gallery.



Replicas of Anasazi Pots by Clint Swink



REYNOLDS



BROOKS

Unique Native American interpretations of the significance of Chimney Rock are available at nearby Capote Lake where you can also camp, fish or enjoy more than 80 species of birds.

Early Excavation and Recent History

Chimney Rock was originally excavated in the early 1920's by Professor J. A. Jeancon and Frank Roberts of the University of Denver. It was designated an Archaeological Area and National Historic Site in 1970. For the last 20 years, Dr. Frank Eddy of the University of Colorado has conducted excavations at and near the area. His research continues today.



Sketch Map of Ruin Locations.



Archaeo-Astronomy

Lunar Standstill

Recent studies by J. McKim Malville of the University of Colorado suggest that the Chimney Rock Pueblo was built solely for reasons of religion and astronomy. Malville's work compares Chimney Rock to megalithic sites in Britain and France. In the late 1970's, the discovery of the Sun Dagger at Chaco Canyon indicated the Anasazi established ceremonial calendars by watching the movements of the sun and moon. In 1988, Malville discovered that cross referencing astronomical and architectural dates suggests that the High Mesa structures may have been inspired by the "lunar standstill" phenomenon which occurs every 18 years. Malville theorizes the Great House was built so that its residents could watch the moon rise between the pinnacles at the end of this cycle.

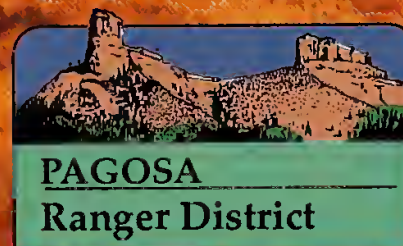


MALVILLE

Chimney Rock, a Chacoan Outlier



As an outlier of the Chacoan culture, Chimney Rock is the most isolated and remote of the Anasazi communities connected to Chaco Canyon, New Mexico. Its core-and-veneer masonry reflects the same architecture found at Chaco. Chimney Rock is also the highest outlier in elevation.



PAGOSA
Ranger District

The Pagosa Springs area offers many other attractions, events and activities. Treasure Falls is the tallest waterfall on the San Juan National Forest. It is easily accessible from Highway 160 at the bottom of Wolf Creek Pass. The town of Pagosa Springs lives up to its Ute name of "healing waters." Hot sulphur springs bubble up all over town. You can visit the Historical Society Museum, Red Ryder Museum, Rocky Mountain Wildlife Park or Fairfield Pagosa Resort; tackle world-class whitewater, fish for trophy trout, hike into the wilderness or hunt the backcountry.



Treasure Falls

Examples of pottery and other artifacts excavated at Chimney Rock are on display at the Pagosa Ranger Station in Pagosa Springs.

Help Preserve Your American Heritage

Ancient ruins, artifacts, fossils and historic remains are fragile and irreplaceable. It is unlawful to injure, destroy, excavate or remove any historic or prehistoric ruin, artifact or object of antiquity on the public lands of the United States.

Flora & Fauna of the Chimney Rock Area

The Archaeological Area ranges from the high desert environment of pinyon/juniper country below to the ponderosa pine/Douglas fir zone on the mesa top. Ball cactus, yucca and sage dominate the valley floor, while mountain mahogany, cliff rose, fendler and service berry thrive at the higher elevations. Indian paintbrush, mountain asters and daisies decorate the area in spring and summer.



Chimney Rock is an historic peregrine falcon eyrie, or nesting site, and teems with animal life. From the lowly rattlesnake to the soaring prairie falcon, wildlife lives in harmony. Grouse, crows, wild turkey and songbirds are plentiful. Mountain lions have been spotted in the vicinity. The area becomes prime winter habitat for deer and elk herds which migrate to the lower elevations to graze.

To Visit Chimney Rock



To get to the Chimney Rock Archaeological Area, take U.S. Highway 160 to Colorado Highway 151, then south on 151 for three miles.

Chimney Rock is open **ONLY TO GUIDED TOURS** between May 15th and September 15th. Please contact the Pagosa Ranger District for the exact times and dates of tours.

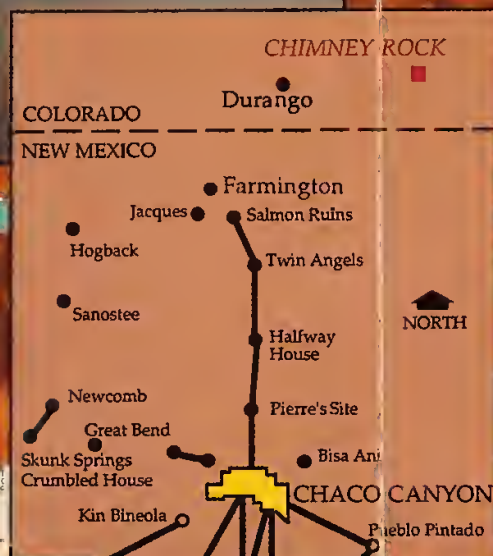
This brochure is a cooperative venture of the Pagosa Ranger District, USDA Forest Service, Pagosa Springs Chamber of Commerce and the Chimney Rock Archaeological Group.

There are many other sites of archaeological and historical interest on the San Juan National Forest. For more information, contact:

Pagosa Ranger District, San Juan National Forest
P.O. Box 310 Pagosa Springs, Co 81147 (303) 264-2268

Map Legend

- PREHISTORIC ROAD
- OUTLIER SITE
- CHACO CULTURE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



Archaeologists believe that the heavy Chacoan influence at Chimney Rock was imported solely by men; that the Chacoan immigrants were not families but single males. Masons and architects were needed at Chimney Rock. Both were typically male occupations. Also, Chimney Rock's religious significance suggests that priests may have made the pilgrimage north from Chaco. Anasazi priesthood was another responsibility held by men.

Chaco Style Kiva Construction

Other archaeological theories hold that Chimney Rock was a trading outpost for the Chacoan culture. Ancient roads connected the outliers to Chaco, and it's believed that Chimney Rock's major export was timber. The buildings at Chaco Canyon contain large timbers that could not have been harvested in the arid desert of northern New Mexico, but could have been brought from Chimney Rock. Speculation suggests the logs were floated down the Piedra River and then carried by hand.

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FUGE

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